



# **Town of Hopkinton, NH**

Office of Selectmen • 330 Main Street • Hopkinton, NH 03229-2627

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**BOARD OF SELECTMEN  
PUBLIC MEETING AGENDA  
MONDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2011  
5:00 PM**

**5:00 – At the Highway Barn – Nonpublic Session: RSA 91-A:3 II. (a)**

**Beginning at 5:30 at the Town Hall**

**I. ADMINISTRATIVE**

Consent Agenda

Hiring Announcement

**II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Public Meeting Minutes December 5, 2011

Nonpublic Meeting Minutes December 5, 2011

Public Meeting Minutes December 6, 2011

Nonpublic Meeting Minutes December 6, 2011

**III. PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS**

6:00 pm Fire Chief Rich Schaeffer-Nonpublic Session: RSA 91-A:3 II. (c)

**IV. PUBLIC FORUM**

**V. OLD BUSINESS**

Budget Committee Update

Community Center

**VI. NEW BUSINESS**

Draft Warrant

Skating Rink Update

**VII. OTHER**

Nonpublic Session: RSA 91-A:3 II. (a)

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

The Board of Selectmen may enter into Non Public Session, if so voted, under the Terms and Conditions of  
RSA 91-A:3 II a~e

All items on this agenda are subject to change without notice



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### **SELECTMEN PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES MONDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2011**

Chairman Jim O'Brien called a regularly scheduled business meeting of the Board of Selectmen to order at 5:33 PM on Monday, December 5, 2011.

#### **Present:**

Jim O'Brien, Chairman

George Langwasser, Selectman

Denis Goddard, Selectman

Neal Cass, Town Administrator

Robin Buchanan, Administrative Assessing Assistant

Absent: Tom Congoran, Bryan Pellerin

Public present: Janet Krzyzaniak, Marion Paxton, Bruce Johnson, Ken Wilkens

#### **I. ADMINISTRATIVE**

The Board approved the following:

Selectmen Goddard made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Selectmen Langwasser seconded the motion.

**VOTE:** O'Brien, Langwasser and Goddard  
voting in favor of the motion; no votes against;  
motion passes 3-0.

#### **II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Board reviewed the minutes of the Public Meeting of November 21, 2011. Selectman Langwasser made a motion, seconded by Selectman Goddard to approve the minutes of the Public Meeting of November 21, 2011.

**VOTE:** O'Brien, Langwasser and Goddard  
voting in favor of the motion; no votes against;  
motion passes 3-0.

The Board reviewed the minutes of the Non Public Meeting of November 21, 2011, Session I. Selectman Langwasser made a motion, seconded by Selectman Goddard to approve the minutes of the Non Public Meeting of November 21, 2011.

**VOTE:** O'Brien, Langwasser and Goddard  
voting in favor of the motion; no votes against;  
motion passes 3-0.

The Board reviewed the minutes of the Non Public Meeting of November 21, 2011, Session II. Selectmen Goddard made a motion, seconded by Selectman Langwasser to approve the minutes of the Non Public Meeting of November 21, 2011.

**VOTE:** O'Brien, Langwasser and Goddard  
voting in favor of the motion; no votes against;  
motion passes 3-0.

Chairmen O'Brien stated the Board met with the Warner Selectmen last week and those minutes will be approved at the next meeting. He also informed the public that there were no votes taken. Selectmen Langwasser informed the public that Chief Schaefer also attended the meeting as it was related to the ambulance billing, as well as working together on projects that would financially benefit each town.

### **III. PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS**

Merelise O'Connor from the Local Government Center (LGC) was in to update the Board on the issues currently facing LGC. Ms. O'Connor stated the Town of Hopkinton has been a member since the mid 80 and LGC welcomes all comments and advice. She went on to explain that it is LGC's, as well as Primex and School Cares' interruptions of 5B that the legislators are concerned over. She further stated any changes will be complied with. She further explained that everything is being looked at including non public sessions, in which legal advice and competitive information in is. LGC was not subject to the Right to Know law, which does not account for competition. Their policies will need to be updated. She will continue to update the Board as information is made available.

Chairmen O'Brien thanked Ms. O'Connor for her time and stated the Board appreciates the work that LGC does. Selectmen Langwasser agreed further stating he wishes LGC well and hopes for the best outcome.

### **IV. OLD BUSINESS**

Chairmen O'Brien asked if everyone had looked over the Welfare Director's job description and if there were any comments or changes. Selectmen Goddard made a motion to approve the Welfare Director's job description as written and to be effective January 1, 2012. Selectmen Langwasser seconded the motion.

**VOTE:** O'Brien, Langwasser and Goddard  
voting in favor of the motion; no votes against;  
motion passes 3-0.

### **V. PUBLIC APPOINTMENTS**

The Webster Selectmen George Cummings and Bruce Johnson as well as Barbara Corliss, Hopkinton Webster Refuse Disposal Committee are here to meet with the Board and Steve Clough, Assistant Superintendent of Public Works. Mr. Cummings would like to schedule a joint public hearing on the Refuse Disposal Ordinance. The two Boards agreed to hold the Public Hearing on January 3, 2012 at the Hopkinton Town Hall to begin at 5:35 pm.

Mr. Cummings inquired of Mr. Clough about an item on the CIP for a break room. Mr. Clough explained there is no place for the employees to eat their lunch out of the dust and dirt and so a small break room is needed. He is hoping to use in house labor, the location will be above the current office and it will also be used for much needed storage space. He estimates it the cost to be much less than is listed on the CIP.

Mr. Cummings also inquired as to the signing of the Warrant Deeds with regards to the property at the Transfer Station. Mr. Cass stated the Warranty Deeds are being signed by the Hopkinton Board of Selectmen tonight and then the Deeds will be sent to the Registry of Deeds for recording. Hopkinton will notify Webster when the Deeds are recorded.

A short discussion ensued with regards to Webster Selectmen Hashem's request for information relative to the landfill monitoring account. Mr. Clough stated he would be happy to meet with Selectmen Hashem.

#### **VI. OLD BUSINESS (continued)**

Budget Committee Update-Mr. Cass stated the following departments presented their budgets to the Budget Committee: Welfare, Ambulance, Fire, Police, Library, Conservation Commission, Cemetery Trustees and Parks and Recreation. Everyone did a good job. The Budget Committee requested the Selectmen take another look at Vendor Payments to insure that there is sufficient money in that account. Mr. Cass stated currently we are over in that budget line. Chairmen O'Brien asked if we have started using the reserve funds, Mr. Cass stated not yet. It was noted the federal government may be giving out less money for fuel assistance this year.

Selectmen Langwasser made a motion to increase the welfare vendor budget line by \$10,000 bringing the total to \$70,000. Selectmen Goddard seconded the motion.

**VOTE:** O'Brien, Langwasser and Goddard  
voting in favor of the motion; no votes against;  
motion passes, 3-0.

Selectmen Langwasser stated the Budget Committee suggested that we bill ½ of regular ambulance costs for those that have no insurance. Mr. Cass noted that Fire Chief Schaefer will be at the next meeting to discuss the ambulance.

Selectmen Langwasser stated the Budget Committee had no questions for Cemetery, Park and Recreations.

It was noted the Conservation Commission made a request for \$250.00 for their budget. Noting it was for dues. Selectmen O'Brien inquired as to the balance of the Conservation Commission's account. He stated the Conservation Commission receives 35% of all of the current use penalties charged during the year and he feels they have sufficient funds in their account to cover the \$250.00. Selectmen Langwasser and Goddard agree. Selectmen Langwasser also stated the Town appreciates all the work the Conservation Commission does in assisting the Town with easements.

#### **VII. PUBLIC APPOINTMENT (continued)**

Steve Clough was in to discuss a possible sewer extension on Penacook Street. This is the best way to increase the rate base and as long as the road is being ditched the Board should consider laying down sewer line. He would like to know if the Board would like him to begin the process by approaching those that live on the road. He would like to get a letter out to those residents in December. Selectmen Goddard stated he would like to see those responses from residents. The Board asked Mr. Clough to start the process by sending out the letters.

### **VIII. PUBLIC FORUM**

Marion Paxton requested the Board send a formal acknowledgement with regards to the Conservation Commission request. Mr. Cass will respond to that request. She also stated that it has come to her attention that a number of people have driven off of Dustin Road, and suggested that instead of lines perhaps the Town could consider putting up signs warning drivers of upcoming curves in the road. Selectmen Langwasser agreed that signs may be more appropriate at some spots. Mr. Cass will ask the Highway Department to look into it.

Mr. Cass informed Mrs. Krzyzaniak that the lights on the tree are very old and it will be impossible to replace them as we do not have a bucket truck, the ladder truck will not work because of the location.

### **IX. NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Cass went over the list of goals for the Selectmen for 2012.

Mr. Cass went over the Holiday Schedule with the Board. It was noted that Veteran's Day will be on a Sunday. However, as Christmas will be on Tuesday in 2012, the Veteran's Day holiday will be used for the day before Christmas.

Selectmen Goddard made a motion to approve the 2012 Holiday Schedule as presented. Selectmen Langwasser seconded the motion.

**VOTE:** O'Brien, Langwasser and Goddard  
voting in favor of the motion; no votes against;  
motion passes, 3-0.

Chairmen O'Brien began a discussion about the Community Center fund by stating at this time we have no plans for a community center and therefore the money in that fund is just sitting there not earning any interest. If the money is not to be used for a community center then should the money be returned to the general fund.

Bryon Carr stated the community center fund was started before the Senior Center was built. When the Center was completed, the town stopped funding it. He further stated the Houston Barn was intended to be the community center. He noted the barn itself was in good shape however, the foundation would need to be repaired or replaced.

Selectmen Langwasser expressed his opinion that the barn will probably not ever become a community center, the expense to renovate is too great and he does not think it is large enough.

Bryon Carr stated that he has seen many barns that have been repurposed, perhaps we need to look into it again. He also suggested that Municipal Operations Improvement Committee look into it.

Marion Paxton stated that Peter Unich reviewed the potential uses for the barn and felt it was not economically feasible. She suggested using the space that we already have, such as the schools. Mrs. Paxton also suggested having a committee like the Fire Station Study Committee look into the issue or a warrant article to dissolve the fund.

No decision were made, however, Chairmen O'Brien asked that the Community Center be left on the agenda for future discussions.

**X. OTHER BUSINESS**

Mr. Cass informed the Board that he attended a Central Regional Planning Commission Transportation Advisory Council. He informed the Board there is software to help towns prioritize the need for road repairs.

Mr. Cass also stated that many of the illegal signs have been removed.

Selectmen Langwasser inquired if Mr. Cass had heard from the Prices regarding the property at Deer Meadow. Mr. Cass stated there still is no estimate; however, the house has been winterized.

Selectmen Langwasser made a motion to go into non public session with regards to RSA 91-A:3 II (a). Selectmen Goddard seconded the motion.

**ROLL CALL VOTE:** O'Brien: yes; Langwasser: yes;  
Goddard: yes; no votes against; motion passes, 3-0.

Chairmen O'Brien stated there will be no further business conducted after the non public session. The Board entered non public session at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Robin Buchanan  
Administrative Assessing Assistant

*These minutes are not official until approved by the Board of Selectmen at their meeting.*



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### **SELECTMEN PUBLIC MEETING MINUTES TUESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2011**

Chairman Jim O'Brien called this properly posted special meeting of the Board of Selectmen to order at 5:30 PM on Monday, November 16, 2009.

**Present:**

Jim O'Brien, Chairman  
George Langwasser, Vice Chairman  
Bryan Pellerin, Selectman  
Neal Cass, Town Administrator

**Non-public Session RSA 91-A: 3 II (a) Hiring**

Selectman Langwasser moved to go into a non-public session regarding hiring under the provisions of Non-public Session RSA 91-A: 3 II (a). Selectman Pellerin seconded the motion.

**VOTE:** Selectmen Langwasser, Pellerin, and Chairman O'Brien voted in favor, and the Chairman declared the motion to have carried unanimously (3-0).

The Board went into nonpublic session, as recorded separately, at 5:30 p.m. The Board returned to public session at 8:35 p.m.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, motion by Selectman Pellerin, seconded by Selectman Langwasser to adjourn the meeting. Vote 3-0 in favor of the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:36 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Neal A. Cass  
Town Administrator

*These minutes are not official until approved by the Board of Selectmen at their meeting.*

December 16, 2011

To: Property Owners From 23 - 173 Penacook Road

The Section of Penacook Road, from the Contoocook Cemetery to the intersection with Indian Ridge Road, is scheduled for upgrading in the near future. This project currently includes installing a drainage system, rebuilding the roadway, and paving. This is the ideal time to consider extending Contoocook's wastewater collection system from Main Street up through this same section of Penacook Road. The possibility of extending a public sewer line to this area will only be investigated if there is an overwhelming consensus, among the property owners who would be affected, that it should be.

This is a preliminary survey of the property owners on Penacook Road who would be affected by including a public sewer line extension as part of the upcoming project. These residents would not be expected to vote on this potential aspect of the project until the details could be finalized. There would have to be a favorable consensus among property owners, a demonstrable benefit to the existing sewer service customers, and an approval by the Town of Hopkinton for a proposal to move forward.

The only certainty at this point would be that any property owner who did end up connecting to the public sewer system would have to pay service charges based on their metered water usage (secondary water meters are allowed so that verified outside water usage would not be considered on the sewer billing). I have attached a list detailing what the sewer charge would have been in 2011, for the affected property owners, had they been connected to the system.

Please respond to this survey and express your opinion. You can email me at [waterworks@tds.net](mailto:waterworks@tds.net) or mail a response to me c/o of the Town of Hopkinton (330 Main Street). All of the input that I receive will be presented to the Board of Selectmen who will make the decision on whether to investigate this possibility. I would also be happy to discuss this with you in person (746-3389) but written responses are the most accurate way for your opinions to be conveyed to the Board.

Respectfully,

Steve Clough  
Assistant Public Works Superintendent  
Town of Hopkinton

Cc: Hopkinton Board of Selectmen



**If These Properties Had Been Connected  
To The Public Sewer System in 2011  
They Would Have Been Billed As Below**

<u>Address</u>	<u>April Billing</u>	<u>October Billing</u>	<u>Total</u>
23 Penacook Road	\$184.63	\$167.92	\$352.55
35 Penacook Road	\$216.38	\$368.59	\$584.97
45 Penacook Road	\$243.10	\$357.50	\$600.60
63 Penacook Road	\$124.66	\$105.00	\$229.66
68 Penacook Road	\$105.00	\$166.99	\$271.99
81 Penacook Road	\$177.58	\$130.70	\$308.28
82 Penacook Road	\$177.58	\$107.52	\$285.10
91 Penacook Road	\$370.10	\$148.34	\$518.44
97 Penacook Road	\$119.11	\$155.40	\$274.51
105 Penacook Road	\$105.00	\$116.59	\$221.59
106 Penacook Road	\$170.52	\$179.09	\$349.61
121 Penacook Road	\$132.22	\$186.14	\$318.36
139 Penacook Road	\$163.46	\$205.80	\$369.26
146 Penacook Road	\$105.00	\$242.09	\$347.09
161 Penacook Road	\$105.00	\$105.00	\$210.00
170 Penacook Road	\$109.03	\$158.93	\$267.96
173 Penacook Road	\$105.00	\$121.63	\$267.96

**Town of Hopkinton, New Hampshire  
Annual Town Meeting Warrant  
March 13 & 24, 2012**

SS: State of New Hampshire

Merrimack County

To the Inhabitants of the Town of Hopkinton, in the County of Merrimack, in the said State, who are qualified to vote in Town affairs:

**You are hereby notified to meet at the Hopkinton High School Gymnasium, 297 Park Avenue, Contoocook, on Tuesday, March 13, 2012 beginning at 7:00 a.m. to act upon the following subjects:**

**The polls will be open from 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.**

**Article 1:** To chose all necessary Town Officers by ballot and majority vote for the ensuing year as enumerated:

1 Selectman	3 Year Term
1 Town Clerk/Tax Collector	1 Year to fill term
1 Budget Committee	2 Years to fill term
1 Budget Committee	3 Year Term
2 Library Trustees	3 Year Term each
1 Cemetery Trustee	3 Year Term
1 Supervisor of the Checklist	6 Year Term
1 Trustee of Trust Funds	3 Year Term

**Article 2:** To see what action the Town will take with respect to the following proposed amendments to the Hopkinton Zoning Ordinance by ballot vote upon the following questions:

1. Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 1 as proposed by the Planning Board (6-0) for the Town of Hopkinton Zoning Ordinance as follows:

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

2. Are you in favor of the adoption of Amendment No. 2 as proposed by the Planning Board (6-0) for the Town of Hopkinton Zoning Ordinance as follows:

*(The Planning Board recommends this amendment).*

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Town of Hopkinton Town Meeting Warrant – March 13 & 24, 2012

To the Inhabitants of the Town of Hopkinton, in the County of Merrimack, in the said State, who are qualified to vote in Town affairs:

You are hereby notified to meet at the Hopkinton High School Gymnasium, 297 Park Avenue, Contoocook, on Saturday, March 24, 2012 at 9:00 a.m. to act upon the following subjects:

**Article 3:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the budget committee's recommended amount of \$ 5,571,791 for general municipal operations.

**(Majority vote required).**

*(The Board of Selectmen recommends this article (5-0)).*

*(The Budget Committee recommends this article (X-X)).*

**General Government Functions**

	<b><u>Budget Committee and Selectmen</u></b>
Executive	\$ 226,055
Election, Registrations, Vital Stats. & Tax Coll.	260,297
Financial Administration	119,207
Assessing	57,800
Legal	28,500
Personnel Administration	22,500
Planning & Zoning Departments	116,713
Cemeteries	43,524
Insurance	138,029
Economic Development Committee	<u>2,000</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 1,014,625</b>

**Public Safety Operations**

	<b><u>Budget Committee and Selectmen</u></b>
Police Department	\$ 670,249
Animal Control	7,255
Ambulance	539,713
Fire Department	240,112
Rescue Squad	8,775
Emergency Management	<u>1</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 1,466,105</b>

**Public Works Operations**

	<b><u>Budget Committee and Selectmen</u></b>
Highway Administration	\$ 566,873
Highways & Streets	632,000
Buildings & Grounds	226,083
Street Lighting	1,800
Transfer Station Operations	534,325
Landfill Maintenance & Monitoring	47,500
Sewer Department	<u>103,955</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 2,112,536</b>

Town of Hopkinton Town Meeting Warrant – March 13 & 24, 2012

**Health & Welfare**

Community Action Program (CAP)  
Human Services Administration  
Human Services Vendors

**TOTAL**

**Budget Committee and Selectmen**

\$ 5,552  
65,687  
52,250

**\$ 123,489**

**Culture and Recreation**

Recreation Department  
Patriotic Purposes  
Hopkinton Library

**TOTAL**

**Budget Committee and Selectmen**

\$ 120,843  
2,750  
\$ 281,265

**\$ 281,265**

**Conservation**

Conservation Commission

**TOTAL**

**Budget Committee and Selectmen**

\$ 1  
**\$ 1**

**Long-term Debt & TAN Interest**

Principle – Bonds and Notes  
Interest – Bonds and Notes  
Interest – TAN

**TOTAL**

**Budget Committee and Selectmen**

\$ 291,363  
106,789  
2,000

**\$ 400,152**

**Article 4:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of three hundred sixty-two thousand (\$ 362,000) to be placed in previously established Capital Reserve funds. Funds to be placed in the Capital Reserve Funds as follows:

**Capital Reserve Accounts**

Fire Vehicles and Equipment  
Public Works Vehicles and Equipment  
Replacement & Equipping of Ambulance  
Police Radio Replacement  
Transfer Station Equipment & Facilities  
Police Cruiser and Accessories Equipment  
Library Replacement Building Systems  
Town Hall Renovations

**TOTAL**

**Amount**  
\$ 105,000  
125,000  
50,000  
7,000  
25,000  
25,000  
15,000  
10,000  
**\$327,000**

***(Majority Vote Required).***

***(The Board of Selectmen recommends this article (5-0)).***

***(Budget Committee recommends this article (9-0)).***

Town of Hopkinton Town Meeting Warrant – March 13 & 24, 2012

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**Article 5:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of twelve thousand dollars (\$12,000) to be placed in previously established Expendable General Trust Funds as follows:

<u>Expendable General Trust Funds</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Building Maintenance	\$ 20,000
Hopkinton Library Technology	5,000
Library Building/Grounds	<u>5,000</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 12,000</b>

**(Majority Vote Required).**

*(The Board of Selectmen recommends this article (5-0)).*

*(The Budget Committee recommends this article (9-0)).*

**Article 6:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifty-eight thousand, nine hundred sixty-five dollars (\$58,965) for the purpose of offsetting the cost of collection and disposal of residential solid waste and such other direct costs as budgeted annually and to authorize the withdrawal of this sum from the Pay by Bag Fund (Revenue Fund) established for this purpose at the 2010 town meeting to fund this appropriation. No funds to be raised by taxation.

**(Majority Vote Required).**

*(The Board of Selectmen recommends this article (5-0)).*

*(Budget Committee recommends this article (9-0)).*

**Article 7:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) for conceptual architecture and engineering for a new fire station with plans to be presented at the 2013 Town Meeting.

**(Majority Vote Required).**

*(The Board of Selectmen recommends this article (3-2)).*

*(Budget Committee recommends this article (9-0)).*

**Article 8:** To see if the Town will vote to set the price of the official Pay-by-Bag bags as follows:

13 gallon bags	\$ 0.75
33 gallon bags	\$ 1.25

**(Majority Vote Required).**

*(The Board of Selectmen recommends this article (5-0)).*

**Article 9:** To see if the Town will vote to discontinue the Community Center Capital Reserve Fund created in 1999. Said funds, with accumulated interest to date of withdrawal, to be transferred to the Town's general fund.

**(Majority Vote Required).**

*(The Board of Selectmen recommends this article (5-0)).*

Town of Hopkinton Town Meeting Warrant – March 13 & 24, 2012

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**Article 10:** To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate the sum of nine hundred sixty dollars (\$960) for the purpose of offsetting operational and maintenance costs of the Slusser Senior Center and to authorize the withdrawal of this sum from the Senior Center Rental Fund (Revenue Fund) established for this purpose at the 2009 town meeting to fund this appropriation. No funds to be raised by taxation.

**(Majority Vote Required).**

*(The Board of Selectmen recommends this article (5-0)).*

*(Budget Committee recommends this article (9-0)).*

**Article 11:** To hear the reports of agents, officers and committees, heretofore chosen, to pass any vote relating thereto and to transact any other business that may legally come before said meeting.

Given under our hands and seal this 14th day of February, 2012,

\_\_\_\_\_, Chair  
Jim O'Brien

\_\_\_\_\_, ViceChair  
George Langwasser

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tom Congoran

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bryan L. Pellerin

\_\_\_\_\_  
Denis Goddard

*Board of Selectmen, Hopkinton, New Hampshire*

Attest:

\_\_\_\_\_, Chair  
Jim O'Brien

\_\_\_\_\_, ViceChair  
George Langwasser

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tom Congoran

\_\_\_\_\_  
Bryan L. Pellerin

\_\_\_\_\_  
Denis Goddard

*Board of Selectmen, Hopkinton, New Hampshire*

## **Heating Assistance Released Targeted to Most Vulnerable Families**

CONCORD – Community Action Agencies will begin releasing Fuel Assistance Program benefits to New Hampshire families this week, targeting the limited dollars to those families in the lowest income brackets with the most difficulty in paying their fuel bills.

“With a 50 percent cut in federal funding, there are no easy choices,” said Joanne Morin, director of the state Office of Energy and Planning. “We looked at a number of options for stretching these dollars, and allocating them fairly.

“In order to protect the health and safety of New Hampshire citizens, we will target funding to families most vulnerable to being left out in the cold,” Morin said. “We will also continue to push President Obama and Congress to adequately fund heating assistance for struggling families.”

The federal government has cut funding for the Low Income Home Heating Program (LIHEAP) also known as the Fuel Assistance Program, nearly in half. Last year, New Hampshire received \$34 million. This year, New Hampshire has only received \$14.7 million.

In light of that significant reduction, the Office of Energy and Planning (OEP) is instructing the Community Action Agencies to release benefits first to those households below 125 percent of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. Those households between 125 percent and 200 percent Federal Poverty Guidelines will be placed on a waiting list pending further federal funding. All households up to the 200 percent Federal Poverty Guidelines will be eligible for emergency benefits if they are in a situation where they have no heat.

This program modification will require changes to the software that issues letters to fuel vendors. While these changes will be made as quickly as possible, it is likely that fuel vendors will not receive official notifications until next week. Going forward, the Office of Energy and Planning will monitor the program to ensure monies are available for emergencies as required by law, and may be forced to start a waiting list at a future date in order to ensure that adequate resources remain to address emergencies.

If you have any questions about your benefits, please call your local Community Action Agency.